

# Full Text of President's Message

Following is the complete text of President Wilson's message to the 66th congress, delivered at noon today.

Gentlemen of the congress:

I deeply regret my inability to be present at the opening of the congress. It seems to me that it is my duty to take part in the councils of the peace conference and contribute what I can to the solution of the problems that are before the world. I am sure that the congress will do its duty to address itself, for they are the questions which affect the peace of the whole world, and from them, therefore, the United States cannot stand apart.

I desire it my duty to call the congress together at this time because it was not wise to postpone the provisions which must be made for the support of the government, which are absolutely necessary for the maintenance of the government and the fulfillment of its varied obligations. For the fiscal year 1919-1920 have not yet been made, and the present fiscal year is at hand; and action upon these appropriations can no longer be prudently delayed. It is my duty, therefore, to call your attention to this matter. It is hardly necessary for me to urge that it may receive your prompt attention.

I shall take the liberty of addressing you on my return on subjects which have most engaged our attention and the attention of the world during these anxious months since the close of last November was signed, the peace of international settlements which must form the subject matter of the present treaties of peace and of our national action in the immediate future. It would be premature to discuss them or to express a judgment about them before they are brought to their complete formulation by the agreements which are now being sought at the table of the conference. I shall hope to lay them before you in their many aspects as soon as arrangements have been reached.

**Lacking the Home Touch.**

I hesitate to venture any opinion or press any recommendation with regard to domestic legislation while absent from the United States and out of daily touch with intimate sources of information and counsel. I am conscious that I need, for so long an absence from Washington, to seek the advice of those who have remained in constant contact with domestic problems and who have known them close at hand from day to day, and I trust that it will very soon be possible for me to do so.

But there are several questions pressing for consideration to which I feel that I may, and indeed must, even now, direct your attention, in general terms. In speaking of them I shall, I dare say, be doing little more than speak your own thoughts. I hope I shall speak your own judgment also.

The question which stands at the front of all others in every country under the present great awakening is the question of labor and perhaps I can speak of it with as great care while engaged in the consideration of subjects which affect all countries as I could at home and amidst the interests which naturally most affect my thought because they are the interests of our own people.

By the question of labor I do not mean the question of efficient industrial production, the question of how labor is to be obtained and made effective in the great process of sustaining populations and winning success amidst commercial and industrial rivalries. I mean that much greater and more vital question, how the men and women who do the daily labor of the world to obtain progressive improvement in the conditions of their labor, to be made happier, and to be served better by the communities and the industries which their labor sustains and advances; how they are to be given their right advantage as citizens and human beings.

**Capital and Labor Partners.**

We cannot go any further in our present direction. We have already gone too far. We cannot live our right life as a nation or achieve our proper success as an industrial community if capital and labor are to continue to be antagonistic instead of being partners. If they are to continue to distrust one another and contrive how they can get the better of one another, or what perhaps amounts to the same thing, calculate what form and degree of coercion they can manage to exert on the one hand, or what they can do to the other, enough to make enterprise profitable for the one, and the fair treatment (enough to make life tolerable. That road has turned out a blind alley.

It is no thoroughfare to real prosperity. We must find another, leading in another direction and to a very different destination. It must lead not merely to accommodation, but also to a genuine co-operation and partnership based upon real community of interest and participation in control.

I am sure that it is not necessary for me to remind you that there is one immediate and very practical question of labor that we should meet in the most liberal spirit. We must be sure that our returning soldiers find the places for which they are fitted in the daily work of the country. This can be done by developing and maintaining upon an adequate scale the admirable organization created by the department of labor for placing men seeking work; and it can also be done, in at least one very great field, by creating new opportunities for individual enterprise.

**Land for Returned Soldiers.**

The secretary of the interior has pointed out the way by which returning soldiers may be helped to find out and take up land in the sparsely populated regions of the country which the federal government has already prepared or can readily prepare for cultivation and reforestation which lie within the more fertile states; and I once the very opportunity of recommending the immediate and substantial support of the congress.

Real and very stimulating conditions await our commerce and industry. Unusual opportunities will be presented themselves to our merchants and producers for profitable and large fields for profitable investment will be opened to our citizens. But it is not only of this that I am thinking; it is of the way in which the war has left many parts of the world where what

will be lacking is not brains or willing hands or organizing capacity or experienced skill, but machinery and raw materials and capital. I believe that our business men, our merchants, our manufacturers and our capitalists will have the vision to see that prosperity in one part of the world ministers to prosperity everywhere, that there is in a very true sense a solidarity of interest throughout the world of enterprise, and that our dealings with the countries that have need of our products and our money will teach them to deem us more than ever friends whose policies we seek in the right way to serve.

## Merchant Ships Common Servants.

Our merchant ships, which have in some quarters been feared as destructive rivals may prove helpful and common servants very much needed and very welcome. Our great shipyards, new and old, will be opened to the use of the world; they will prove immensely serviceable to every maritime people in restoring, much more rapidly than would otherwise have been possible, the tonnage wantonly destroyed in the war. I have only to suggest that there are many points at which we can facilitate American enterprise in foreign trade by opportune legislation and make it easy for American merchants to go where there will be welcomed as friends rather than as dreaded antagonists. America has a great and honorable service to perform in bringing the commercial and industrial undertakings of the world back to their old course and saving again, and putting a solid structure of credit under them. All our legislation should be friendly to such plans and purposes.

And credit and enterprise alike will be quickened by timely and helpful legislation with regard to taxation. I hope that the congress will find it possible to undertake an early reconsideration of federal taxes in order to make our system of taxation more simple and easy of administration and the taxes as light burdens as they can be made and yet suffice to support the government and meet all its obligations.

The figures to which those obligations have arisen are very great indeed, but they are not so great as to make it difficult for the nation to meet them and meet them, perhaps, in a future generation, by taxes which will neither crush nor discourage. These are not so great as they seem; not so great as the immense sums we have had to borrow, added to the immense sums we have had to raise by taxation, would seem to indicate; for a very large proportion of those sums were raised in order that they might be loaned to the governments with which we were associated in the war, and those loans will, of course, constitute assets not liabilities, and will not have to be taken care of by our taxpayers.

"The main thing we shall have to care for is that our taxation shall rest as lightly as possible on the productive resources of the country that its rates shall be stable and that it shall be constant. Its revenue yielding power. We have found the main sources from which it must be drawn. I take it for granted that its main stays will henceforth be the income tax, the excess profits tax, and the estate tax. All these can be adjusted to yield a constant and adequate return and yet not constitute a too grievous burden on the taxpayers. A revision of the income tax has already been provided for by the act of 1918, but I think you will find that further changes can be made to advantage both in the rates of the tax and in the method of its collection. Excess profits tax need not long be maintained at the rates which were necessary while the enormous expenses of the war had to be borne; but it should be made the basis of a permanent system which will reach undue profits without dis-

couraging the enterprise and activity of our business men. The tax on inheritance ought, no doubt, to be reconsidered in its relation to the fiscal system of the several states, but it certainly ought to remain a permanent part of the fiscal system of the government also.

Many of the minor taxes provided for in the revenue legislation of 1917 and 1918, though no doubt made necessary by the pressing necessities of the war time can hardly find sufficient justification under the easier circumstances of peace, and can now happily be got rid of. Among these, I hope you agree are the excises upon various manufacturers and the taxes upon retail.

"There is now in fact a real community of interest between capital and labor, but it has never been made evident in action. It can be made operative and manifest only in a new organization of industry. The business men and the sound practical sense of the states but the new work such a partnership out when once they realize exactly what it is that they seek and sincerely adopt a common purpose with regard to it.

**How Congress Can Further Help.**

It can now help in the difficult task of giving a new form and spirit to industrial organization by coordinating the several agencies of conciliation and adjustment which have been brought into existence by the difficulties and mistaken policies of the present management of industry, and by setting up and developing new federal agencies of advice and information which may serve as a clearing house for the best experiments and the best thought on this great matter, upon which every thinking man must be aware that the future development of society directly depends.

Agencies of international counsel and suggestion are presently being created in connection with the league of nations in this very field; but it is international action and the enlightened policy of individuals, cor-

porations and societies within each nation that must bring about the actual reforms. The members of the committees on labor of the two houses will hardly need suggestions from me as to what means they shall seek to make the federal government the agent of the whole nation and in pointing out and if need be guiding the press of reorganization and reform.

Nevertheless, there are parts of our tariff system which need prompt attention. The experiences of the war have made it plain that in some cases too great reliance on foreign supply is dangerous, and that in determining certain parts of our tariff policy domestic considerations must be borne in mind which are political as well as economic.

**Dye Industry Needs Protection.**

Among the industries to which special consideration should be given is that of the manufacture of dyes, stuffs and related chemicals. Our complete dependence upon German supplies before the war made the interruption of trade a cause of exceptional economic disturbance. The close relation between the manufacturer of dyes, on the one hand, and of explosives and poisonous gases on the other, more over, has given the industry an exceptional significance and value.

Although the United States will gladly and unhesitatingly join in the program of disarmament, it will, nevertheless, be the policy of obvious prudence to make certain of the successful maintenance of many strong and well equipped chemical plants. The German chemical industry with which we will be brought into competition was and may well for a time be a thoroughly knit monopoly, capable of exercising a

competition of a peculiar invidious and dangerous kind.

The United States should, moreover, have the means of properly protecting itself whenever our trade is discriminated against by foreign nations, in order that we may be as

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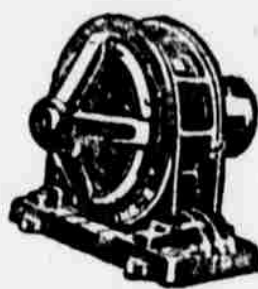
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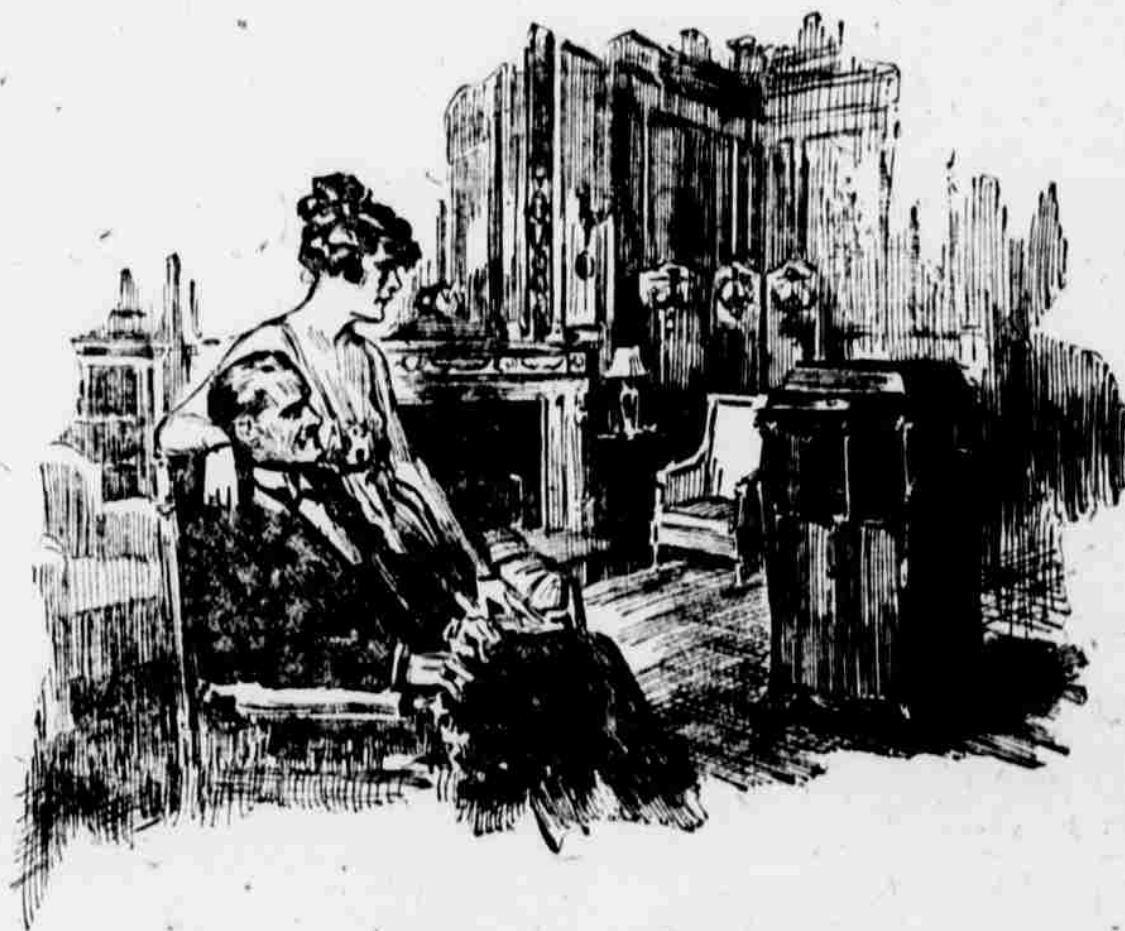
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